

To: Richard K. Bernstein

Date: January 18, 1965

From: Operational Planning Unit

Subject: State-Owned Armories

(For Internal Distribution)

EDWIN FRIEDMAN, DIRECTOR

A study of armories owned and operated by the State was undertaken in response to a request from Commissioner Lazarus for the City Planning Commission's judgment as to which properties it would be most advantageous for the City to acquire in the next round of negotiations with the State. The Department of Real Estate has already completed negotiations for the return to City ownership of two armories in Manhattan (Madison Avenue at 94 Street and Park Avenue at 34 Street, and two in Brooklyn (171 Clermont Street and 801 Dean Street).

There are several bases upon which a priority acquisition list of armories may be made:

1. The site may fulfill the immediate needs of an operating agency;
2. The site, being located in a community for which policy has or soon will be established, may serve a specific purpose in the foreseeable future;
3. The site, by reason of its location within an area where existing uses need strengthening, may be offered to either public or private users for development under careful controls.

While it is obvious that certain sites may be beneficial for the City to acquire from the viewpoint of a return of valuable property to the City tax rolls, this factor will undoubtedly be heavily weighed by the Department of Real Estate itself and need concern us only secondarily. However, we have listed separately all sites which would be particularly desirable to private developers in order to clarify the issues under discussion.

In establishing priorities among the various armories, an effort was made to determine the extent and significance of the military activity and community activity supported by each armory. Policy regarding the use to which operative armories shall be put has been set down in a series of State directives. A vital operational regulation, for our purposes, stipulates that an armory shall make its facilities available to nonprofit community organizations on a non-fee

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basis, subject to minimal insurance requirements. Indeed, each armory is so designed as to make it ideally suited to a wide variety of community uses: large assemblies, exhibitions, indoor sports, theatrical productions. In cases where the State has specifically removed from a particular armory the burden of offering its facilities for community service it is usually also the case that military activity has simultaneously become less important. Where an armory is fully operative both for military and community purposes it will undoubtedly remain so for a long period of time -- and it is to the City's advantage that this condition continue, for the community gains the benefit of the State expenditure of funds. Where an armory is neither active militarily nor in community activities, it could be to the City's advantage to acquire the property for reuse.

Wider use of armory facilities can and should be made by organizations servicing the City's communities, particularly youth organizations. One of the major causes of the infrequent demand for armory space is a general lack of knowledge of its availability. For purposes of spreading such information we recommend that the Bureau of Community Services of the Board of Education be given the responsibility of encouraging further use and acting as liaison with the somewhat reticent armory administrators.

The condition of each structure, while noted, is not considered to be a significant determinant of future use. The State continues to pour funds into the maintenance of structures which are basically unsound. Furthermore, in no instance can it be recommended that an armory be turned over to a community in need of indoor recreational or assembly space no matter how excellent its conditions; maintenance and operating costs for these old and fortresslike structures are so great as to preclude their efficient operation by a community group with limited funds. The other use which the structure proper can serve besides community facilities would be warehousing for industrial users and there is no indication at present as to its value for this purpose. Therefore, our recommendations concern only the site of an armory, not the structure itself. In no instance can we recommend that the structure be rehabilitated for nonmilitary use,



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All listed as suitable for retention and operation by the State are in excellent condition.

The body of this report is divided into three sections:

1. A fact sheet covering all the armories studied;
2. A list of the armories by order of priority, indicating the reasons for each ranking;
3. A general description of features common to armories and a detailed description of each of the 18 armories presently in State hands, with supporting documentation for our priority recommendations.

Edwin Friedman

SKF:van

FACT SHEET
STATE-OWNED ARMORIES

Location	Community	Size of Parcel (sq. ft.)	Assessed Value of Land	Assessed Value of Structure	Condition of Structure	Extent of Activity*
<u>Manhattan</u>						
1. 125 W. 14 St.	Border of Chelsea and Greenwich Village	46,500	\$570,000	\$360,000	Dilapidated	1
2. 68 Lexington Ave. (26 St.)	Midtown, East	60,300	1,230,000	500,000	Excellent	3
3. 56 W. 66 St.	West Side	17,500	200,000	290,000	Fair	1
4. 643 Park Ave. (67 St.)	East Side	81,000	3,700,000	600,000	Excellent	2
5. 2366 Fifth Ave. (n. 143 St.)	Central Harlem	102,000	240,000	560,000	Excellent	4
6. 214 St. Washington Ave. (169 St.)	Washington Heights	88,570	447,000	628,000	Excellent	3
<u>Bronx</u>						
7. 29 W. Kingbridge Road	Kingbridge	210,000	700,000	1,500,000	Excellent	4
8. 1122 Franklin Ave.	Morrisania	61,000	140,000	500,000	Dilapidated	1

* Ranked from 1 to 4, the lowest number indicating the least activity.

1. Used almost exclusively for vehicular storage.
2. Limited capacity for training, approximately 500 men only. No community activities.
3. Large capacity (approximately 1000 men). Little or no community activities.
4. Large capacity. Extensive community activities.

Location	Community	Size of Parcel (sq. ft.)	Assessed Value of Land	Assessed Value Of Structure	Condition of Structure	Extent Activity
<u>Brooklyn</u>						
9. 357 Sumner Ave.	Bedford- Stuyvesant	117,600	170,000	630,000	Fair	2
10. 355 Marcy Ave.	Williamsburg- Greenpoint	125,000	80,000	**	Fair	2
11. 1579 Bedford Ave.	Crown Heights	131,555	1,025,000 (Partial exemption)	Poor		2
12. 1402 Eighth Ave.	Park Slope	109,400	200,000	800,000	Poor	3
13. 1322 Bedford Ave.	Crown Heights	206,494	325,000	625,000	Good	3
14. 52 St. & First Ave.	Busn Terminal	149,800	1,325,000	700,000	Fair	2
<u>Queens</u>						
15. 137-58 Northern Blvd.	Flushing	58,100	145,000	50,000	Good	2
16. 93-05 168 St.	Jamaica	102,900	100,000	1,400,000	Excellent	3
<u>Staten Island</u>						
17. 321 Manor Rd.	Port Richmond	118,300	400,000	250,000	Excellent	4
18. Murray Hulbert Ave. & Hanna St.	Stapleton	26,412	20,000	20,000	Fair	2

** Listed as \$10,000 in Real Estate Valuation 1934-61, presumably erroneously.

STATE-OWNED ARMORIES

Listed by

SUGGESTED ORDER OF REACQUISITION BY CITY

Sites Which Can Serve an Immediate Reuse Function

1. 1122 Franklin Avenue (The Bronx). The only site now available for a much-needed new school in the neighborhood lies two blocks away from this Armory and consists of two parcels separated by a street so that the school building will be in two parts. If this Armory site could be made available within the next year or so, the Board of Education could reconsider its present ill-advised construction plan. A school here would link Morris High School on the east with Hines Park playground and open a dramatic view of the church focal point which is now entirely lost to the community. Should negotiations be too time-consuming to accommodate immediate construction needs, the block can serve as outdoor recreation space--a vital need in the community--and at the same time accomplish the dual goals of clearing seriously blighted structures and forming an integrated design pattern.
2. 1402 Eighth Avenue (Brooklyn). This Armory satisfies the Department of Welfare's site requirements for a shelter for dependent and neglected girls (Line 517, 1965-66 Capital Budget): desirable size and shape of parcel, good transportation for visitors and staff, location in a residential neighborhood which has not become so downgraded as to constitute a depressing environment for the youngsters and yet not so upgraded as to consider itself threatened by such a facility. Should this site be unavailable at the time construction must begin, it would be ideal for re-use in relocation housing.
3. 357 Sumner Avenue (Brooklyn). An excellent site for either new housing or open recreation space. Bedford-Stuyvesant is in serious need of both. While community

leaders would like to see the structure turned over to the community for indoor recreation space, this disposition is not recommended. Maintenance costs are high, there is a great deal of waste space, and the structure itself is old and in a short time will deteriorate into yet another source of community blight.

Sites Which Have a Potential Reuse Function

4. 1579 Bedford Avenue (Brooklyn). An excellent site for new housing in Crown Heights, an area where middle-income residential construction should be encouraged as a community stabilizer. The site is large enough to accommodate approximately 330 dwelling units, under the applicable R6 zoning regulations.
5. 355 Marcy Avenue (Brooklyn). Located in the Williamsburg-Greenpoint area, where residential uses have been strengthened by the construction of Lindsey Park and the contemplated construction of new schools, it is potentially desirable as a site for middle-income housing. It can accommodate approximately 310 dwelling units under the applicable R6 zoning regulations.
6. 216 Ft. Washington Avenue (Manhattan). The Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center's need for staff housing can be satisfied on this site. It lies on the immediate northern boundary of the medical complex and would be well-served by existing community facilities. The present residential component is more or less stable and new residential construction which does not create relocation problems would be desirable from the community's point of view.
7. Murray Hulbert Avenue and Hanna Street (Staten Island). Two blocks from the proposed Harbour Houses project and adjacent to an outdoor swimming pool and the Pier Recreation Center which services the communities of Stapleton and Tompkinsville, this site should be integrated with what will become an attractive oceanside residential community, and could be utilized as a landscaped area containing outdoor adjuncts to the recreational complex and buffering new shoreside development from the existing dilapidated piers.

Sites Which May Be Suitable for Private Development

8. 52 Street and First Avenue (Brooklyn). Potentially an excellent site for industrial development. Located on the Brooklyn piers and having excellent rail and highway connections, its priority ranking would rise considerably should the City embark on an intensive program of industrial relocation. Near the Army Supply Base, which may be abandoned, its reuse should be considered in conjunction with plans for the entire stretch of this section of the Brooklyn waterfront.
9. 68 Lexington Avenue (Manhattan). Valuable fully-assembled property for commercial redevelopment in an area where new office construction is beginning to change the face of the environment.
10. 56 West 66 Street (Manhattan). A small parcel (17,500 sq. ft.) which may be useful as a complement to new construction surrounding the Lincoln Center complex.
11. 137-58 Northern Boulevard (Queens). Would be suitable for the expansion of shopping facilities on this intensively used stretch of Northern Boulevard. It has the additional commercial advantage of lying close to the intersection with Main Street, another intensive shopping street in an area where residential construction is increasing rapidly.
12. 1322 Bedford Avenue (Brooklyn). A well-maintained structure, it is used exclusively for military purposes. Immediate disposition is highly unlikely. Because it does not serve a useful community function, it was not listed among the "Armories Which Should Remain in Present Ownership."

Armories Which Should Remain in Present Ownership

13. 643 Park Avenue (Manhattan). Designated as a superior example of armory architecture by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, it is magnificently maintained by the State and the 107th Regiment.

14. 2366 Fifth Avenue (Manhattan). Functions as an indoor recreation center and community assembly point for all of Harlem.
15. 29 West Kingsbridge Road (The Bronx). Near the Hunter College-Walton High School campus complex, the structure is an imposing example of fortress design-- straight out of a medieval fairy tale. Its two towers are a landmark visible from various points in this section of The Bronx. The surrounding community should be encouraged to make further use of its facilities.
16. 93-05 168 Street (Queens). As long as the training of military personnel must take place within the City, a location such as this is entirely suitable. The surrounding area is zoned for manufacturing and the neighboring residential area is underutilized.
17. 125 West 14 Street (Manhattan). The City and the State have already decided to construct a new Armory on this site. There has been discussion of allowing commercial users into the new structure. This multiple use should be encouraged. In view of the continuous upgrading of adjacent residential neighborhoods, a new office-type structure on this site will, we hope, encourage a continuing process of upgrading on other 14 Street commercial sites.
18. 321 Manor Road (Staten Island). Lying on an 18-acre parcel, this small Armory is being remodeled and enlarged to more than twice its present size in order to accommodate units being displaced by the return of old armories to City ownership. The location is entirely suitable for expanded military use.

ARMORIES: DESCRIPTIVE MATERIAL

Although differing in size, structural condition, usefulness for military purposes and locational setting, the armories have several features in common.

I. Layout and Community Use

The basic layout provides for a bank of diverse rooms (administrative offices, reception rooms, company meeting rooms, kitchen and dining rooms, gym, locker and shower rooms and military classrooms) occupying the front position of each floor, with a massive drill shed lying immediately beyond and rising to the full height of the building, usually 5 stories. There are no obstruction at any point on the floor of the arena, its roof being supported by girders across the skylight. A ring of spectator seats surrounds the open arena at the second-floor level, seating, in some cases, as many as 3,000 spectators. The arena is usually large enough to accommodate the most space-consuming of athletic events.

Few communities have either the will or resources to construct accommodations which can meet the recreational and assembly needs of all age groups on a nondenominational basis. An armory located in a residential district can therefore play a vital role in community life.

Only one, the 369th Infantry Regiment Armory located in Harlem, is presently being utilized to the fullest extent by the community of which it is a part. The factor determining whether or not an armory's facilities will be utilized, even minimally, by the community appears to be the will of the commanding officer, at whose discretion allotments of space are made. His desire to rent out the facilities on a commercial basis or to avoid maintenance problems may outweigh other considerations, even the State directive. However, if there were more widespread knowledge of the availability of this space on a non-fee basis, further use by community groups could be made of the armories. We have recommended in the preface to this report that the Community Services Bureau of the Board of Education, exercise its good offices as a clearing house for more intensive community use of armory facilities.

II. Military Use

The demands of modern warfare have so altered the locational needs of military establishments as to make central locations no longer strategically advisable. Nor does the peacetime training program assign inductees or employees to armories near their homes or place of work. Albany plans to construct all new armories for the 42nd Division (which covers the southern half of New York State) in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The State's new building plans call for--wisely, we think--small structures specifically designed for use by the community of which they are a part so that they can be in use for the full day rather than the evening hours alone.

The Defense Department's newly announced plans to combine Federal units with National Guard units point to a further consolidation of training facilities and to their more efficient use.

Except for the storage of military vehicles, record-keeping, and meetings of veterans' organizations, military units use the armories only during specified evening hours, usually once a week. (Some armories function almost exclusively as vehicle warehouses and since the vehicles are used only during the two-week spring training encampments, the State is spending a good deal of money on maintaining cars in relatively luxurious quarters.)

The drill sheds and basement rifle ranges are basic instructional facilities.

III. Ownership

Except for the Armory at 66th and Park, to which special ownership conditions attach, and 2 armories which have always been State-owned, each armory was built and furnished by the City on City-owned land but is owned and operated by the State. The Department of Real Estate reports that this was the situation prior to the "transfer" of the armories to the State during World War II and is not able to clarify the exact nature of the deed arrangements made at that time, or those being negotiated at present. This lack of clarity adds to the difficulties of

evaluating the possibility of eventual return and the City's legal right to present use.

Following is a description of the particular characteristics pertaining to each of the armories. They are cited by address since the names of the armories are chiefly historical and do not necessarily indicate which regiments are now quartered there. Where maintenance costs are noted, the information was obtained from interviews with the operating personnel.

MANHATTAN ARMORIES:

1. 121 West 14 Street

Size: 40,000 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$570,000 for land, \$930,000 for land and improvements; \$12.25 per square foot of land.

Present Use: This Armory has been deactivated (meaning no rentals may be charged and no headquarters may be located here) pending completion of negotiations currently being undertaken by the Department of Real Estate. It is presently used to store military vehicles belonging to active armories, primarily the 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue and 26 Street. Various small military units still meet here and a few nonmilitary groups, but activities and staff have been greatly curtailed.

Structural Condition: Built in the 1880's, the building is 8 stories high and contains no elevator. Its roof leaks and the bricks have become powderized in sections on the 15th Street side. All locker and shower equipment has been removed to active armories. There are 75 separate company rooms and classrooms.

Neighborhood Conditions: Lying on the border between Chelsea and Greenwich Village, the surrounding area is undergoing considerable change, Chelsea a residential upgrading process and the North Village extensive redevelopment. The 14 Street shopping thoroughfare remains constant in type of retail and manufacturing facilities offered: discount stores of various types and many loft structures. Directly across the street from this armory is the Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters.

Recommendations: Land use proposals for the immediate area cite this block as well as its neighbor to the east as remaining in general commercial use. It appears certain, at this stage of the negotiations, that the State and City will use the site to construct a new armory, which will be

almost indistinguishable from any other office building. There has been discussion of combining private commercial uses with military functions in the new building. (This multiple use should be encouraged in view of the upgrading of the adjacent residential areas, a refinement of the structures on this block is desirable.

2. 68 Lexington Avenue (26 Street)

Size: 60,300 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$1,230,000 for land; \$1,730,000 for land and improvements; \$20.38 per square foot, of land.

Present Use: This is an actively functioning armory, serving as regimental and area command headquarters and training ground for several small units. Space is occasionally rented out for various art shows and community functions, but such ventures are kept at a minimum. The commanding officer complains of a lack of space in which to perform immediate functions.

Structural Condition: In excellent condition and well-maintained, this Armory can be said to fall within the "luxury" category. Its appointments are of high quality; the military trophy rooms are sumptuous. Since there is no direct access to the drill shed, nor a full basement, military vehicles must be parked at auxiliary armories.

Neighborhood Conditions: The armory lies one block from Madison Square Park and four blocks from Gramercy Park. The armory block itself is entirely surrounded by lofts, except for The New York Life Insurance Building to the north. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company occupies two full blocks directly to the southwest and Remington Rand has its headquarters two blocks away. The rest of the neighborhood's uses are an interesting composite of manufacturing and office structures heavily interspersed with a variety of college branches, private schools, and charitable organizations. New residential construction is pushing north on Third Avenue from Gramercy Park.

Recommendations: In view of the military activity in this Armory it is unlikely that it will revert to City use in the foreseeable future. In this area, an armory proper has little value in community use, but the site would be an extremely valuable piece of real estate in view of its central location and proximity to a cluster of influential office structures. Further, a fully assembled lot in this area is rare and highly desirable.

3. 56 West 66 Street

Size: 17,500 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$200,000 for land; \$490,000 for land and improvements; \$11.40 per square foot of land.

Present Use: This is the smallest armory in Manhattan, and the most secretive. The State has been slow in granting permission to enter, whereas such permission has been relatively easy to obtain for the other armories. Nor will the staff supply even the most innocuous of information.

Structural Condition: Although seemingly in good condition, its space is so limited as to preclude any but immediate military office use. Indeed, the building contains only one classroom and the small drill shed is entirely filled by a few military trucks.

Neighborhood Conditions: The armory lies one and a half blocks from Lincoln Center and is the first block bordering on Central Park which is left unbroken by the easterly swerve of Broadway. The buildings fronting on both sides of 66 Street are walk-up apartment houses, old but well-kept. The quietness of this street is in marked contrast to the vitality of the area just one-half block to the west. In general, all of the easterly side streets off the Lincoln Center Area have the same air of quiet waiting.

Recommendations: After the 14 Street Armory, this is the most likely to revert to City ownership. Zoning at R10 for the southern frontage of the block and the blocks immediately south reflects not so much existing

conditions as the City's desire to encourage eventual high-density residential growth in an area which possesses a concentration of desirable residential features: Central Park, excellent transportation facilities, Lincoln Center and proximity to the CBD. Commercial uses eventually to revolve around Lincoln Center have already been zoned for the blocks immediately east of the Center, and the one block of commercial zoning which fingers into the residential areas bordering the length of Central Park West comes in on the northern frontage of 66 Street, immediately across from the Armory, thereby increasing the site's potential value. Given the developing trends in this area, this parcel should be of great interest to private developers as they gain confidence in the potential of the neighborhood for residential development.

4. 643 Park Avenue (67 Street)

Size: 81,000 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$3,700,000 for land; \$4,300,000 for land and improvements; \$45.68 per square foot, of land.

Present Use and Recommendations: A New York City showplace, this Armory was built in 1885 with a turn-of-the-century opulence rarely seen today. It has been furnished and refurbished with an eye to retaining the charm of another era: the public reception halls are furnished with antiques; beautiful stained glass windows and heavy wood carving and panelling abound. The trophies of military glory are so displayed as to form a small but well-planned historical museum.

Although two battalions and a brigade maintain headquarters here, intense military usage is limited to only a few evenings a week, and the facilities are almost never used on a community basis. All other activities are either functions-of-state (General MacArthur's lying-in-state; General deGaulle's New York reception) or commercial ventures (rehearsals for a World's Fair theatrical presentation were in progress during my visit). Use of the facilities

for recreational or assembly purposes are limited to a private club restricted in membership to families of the Regiment.

This is the only Armory in the country which was built and is owned entirely by the Regiment. The City owns the land and has leased it to the Regiment in perpetuity, the State maintains the Armory for use by the Regiment, and the City contributes \$8,000 yearly. In other words, both the State and the City are partners in supporting what amounts to a "city-club" for private users. However, the Armory has been designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission as the prime example of armory architecture in the City, and the Regiment is serving the interests of the City as well as its own by administering and maintaining it in a manner which public operation would not be able to equal. Mr. Van Derpool has often claimed that a landmark can be preserved only insofar as its administrators have both the necessary capability and the capital.

5. 2366 Fifth Avenue (West 143 Street).

Size: 102,000 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$240,000 for the land; \$800,000 for land and improvements;

\$2.35 per square foot ^{of land.} / It should be noted here that while this Armory stands on land assessed at a relatively low level by comparison to other armories, the value of the structure in relation to land value is considerably higher than any of the other armories. Although the appraisal approach toward the armories as a group is not made explicit, the relationship of the figures in this case tally with existing conditions.

Present Use: Of ample dimensions and equipped with facilities which fit both military and community needs, this Armory is fully utilized as a community center. Its daily schedule of events reads like a poor-man's YMCA. Approximately seven different neighborhood groups meet here every night and on Saturday. A wide variety of teen-age groups (PAL, junior cadets, welfare

camp year-round program, etc.) use its facilities. During emergencies it is a central distributing point for the Red Cross, Police Department and Department of Welfare. The intense use of the facilities for neighborhood groups is encouraged by the commanding officer who himself "grew up" in and through armory-sponsored youth activities. To cover maintenance fees the drill shed is rented out during daytime hours.

Structural Condition: In excellent condition, the building contains a fully usable basement on which 100 military vehicles (5-ton and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton) are stored and maintained. In other words, this Armory is ideally suited for a full dual-purpose life. There are a large number of classrooms and company rooms. It is the only Armory visited in which classrooms were devoted to the teaching of other than strictly military skills. In addition, the basement contains an auditorium with a stage for use on more festive occasions, rather than the ornate reception rooms of other armories. Built in 1927, it is by Manhattan armory standards a relatively new structure.

Neighborhood Conditions: Located on the eastern half of a 900-ft. block, the building faces onto the Harlem River and backs onto a vacant lot of sizable proportions. The superblock to the north is a public playground and to the south is Delano Village.

Recommendations: Every effort should be made to keep this structure in its present use.

6. 216 Ft. Washington Avenue (169 Street)

Size: 88,570 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$447,000 for land; \$1,075,000 for land and improvements; \$5.04 per square foot of land.

Present Use: Headquarters for a battalion, the Armory is in military use two nights a week, and is used by the ubiquitous tennis club on the other nights. Over 100 company and classrooms line the corridors on three floors, which, because of military regulations, may be used by troops only. The drill shed,

the only other facility in the building, is occasionally rented out to City-wide youth groups and for high school and college track meets. Because the unusual layout presents surveillance and maintenance problems, fuller community use has been ruled out.

Structural Condition: Built between 1909 and 1914, the structure is in excellent condition. This is the only armory in which the drill shed is situated at the third-floor level. The building rests on a solid rock foundation which makes it necessary to utilize the first floor for storage and heating equipment normally confined to the basement. Part of the site, approximately 200' x 45', is a sheer rock outcropping which has never been excavated. The building also boasts a swimming pool, unused for many years because of a leak in its rock floor which cannot be found without ripping down a section of the building.

Neighborhood Conditions: The Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, on the southern boundary of the Armory, stretches 5 blocks to the south and toward the river. Fort Washington itself is a residential neighborhood of old but structurally sound apartment buildings, possessing many desirable residential features: adequate schools, play facilities and parks, established community-group headquarters, accessible subsidiary shopping districts, and good transportation facilities.

Recommendations: Because of the waste of space involved in utilizing the entire structure as a community recreational facility, and the enormous cost of maintaining a building of this type, the armory structure, if and when converted to City ownership, should not be retained. The site would be a valuable addition to the hospital complex and, as new residential quarters for professional staff, would be a stabilizing and even renewing influence in a neighborhood which should be conserved now so that it will be saved from the fate of similar neighborhoods where pressure for public action was not exerted in sufficient time to stem the downgrading process.

BROOKLYN ARMORIES

1. 357 Sumner Avenue

Size: 117,600 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$170,000 for land; \$800,000 for land and improvements; \$1.50 per square foot.

Bordering Streets: Putnam Avenue, Jefferson Street, Sumner Avenue, Lewis Avenue.

Present Use: This Armory is located in the heart of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community but draws its trainees from other areas of the City. The units training here are small, primarily because the Fire Department has placed occupancy limitations on the structure. The drill shed is covered with vehicles. Use by the community is limited, not because there is little need but rather because of the administration's reticence. Community dances are occasionally held in the center hall, but these are rare. The superintendent proudly states that the drill shed is used for Pratt basketball team practice--hardly a community service.

Structural Condition: The building, although constructed in 1898, is not in as bad condition as one might expect. The roof was recently repaired at a cost of \$179,000. The bricks of the structure show their age; many of them are powderized and in danger of falling. Except for a large open hall leading from the front administrative offices to the massive drill shed, the Armory is of standard layout and design.

Neighborhood Conditions: Only one open space, Tompkins Park, is presently available for the whole of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, although sterile-looking school playgrounds abound. Tompkins Park lies at the east of the community; the armory site lies to the west, and is entirely surrounded--north, south, east, and west-- by row upon row of brownstones and deteriorated walk-ups. While school construction in this area has been vigorous, new housing is rare and located only on the periphery of the community.

Recommendations: The acquisition by the City of this site is definitely high priority. Planning and social welfare activity in Bedford-Stuyvesant is growing and will continue to grow under incentives being provided on many levels of government. The acquisition of the site for either housing or open space would tie in with existing programs. Community leaders have had their eyes on this property for a long period of time and would like to retain the structure as a community meeting house and indoor recreational center. Certainly Bedford-Stuyvesant needs such a facility. The Community Council of Greater New York in its study of Comparative Recreation Needs and Services in New York Neighborhoods states, "Among the group of 16 neighborhoods in Quintile I which are very much above average on the socio-economic index of need, or have relatively the most need, Bedford-Stuyvesant stands out as having the lowest availability of services . . . relative to needs." However, the City would be ill-advised to undertake the support of a structure of this size and layout, no matter how essential the services it could offer. The electricity bills alone, even with present use limited to the evening hours, runs \$900.00 a month. General maintenance costs are high--the roof needs repair periodically. The structure itself is an eyesore and its rapid deterioration contributes to the blight in the neighborhood. In the interests of providing space to meet the community's assembly and indoor recreational needs, City funds could be used to greater effect in the construction of a new community center for Bedford Stuyvesant.

2. 355 Marcy Avenue

Size: 125,000 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$80,000 for land; \$90,000 for land and improvements. (This information, taken from Real Estate Valuation 1964-65, is open to question.)

Present Use: This is one of the few armories in the City that have always stood on State-owned property. Military activity is limited to weekends. The gargantuan shed is used primarily for the storage and repair of vehicles. No community functions do or can take place in this particular structure.

Structural Condition: Built in 1883, the structure would be an eyesore even were it not in its present poor condition. It is impossible to heat the huge arena and no attempt is made to do so. A long aisle on one side of the main drill shed can be heated (it adjoins what were once cavalry stables) and school groups have been asking for the use of even this aisle, indicating the value of even such insufficient indoor recreation space.

Neighborhood Conditions: The Armory lies in an R6 District which is surrounded on three sides by manufacturing districts. Housing lies to the north and light industry to the south. The residential area is small and surrounded by industry. The Brooklyn Navy Yard lies at the eastern border of the residential area.

Recommendations: A strengthening of residential uses in this area is already underway with the construction of Lindsey Park, a Title I project, and the proposed construction of new schools. This site is amply suited to the development of new housing as a part of the process of rejuvenating the area. It can accommodate approximately 310 new units under existing R6 zoning.

3. 1579 Bedford Avenue

Size: 131,350 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$1,250,000 for land and improvements. Listed as being only partially exempt, but no explanation given for this exemption. Real Property Assessment makes no differentiation between value of land and improvements.

Bordering Streets: Bedford Avenue, Union Street, President Street, and Rogers Avenue.

Present Use: This Armory is almost exclusively devoted to the storage of military vehicles. Its complement of trainees is small. Other uses are almost non-existent. The Crown Heights Community Council has requested the use of the structure for its own purposes, and negotiations are presently under way.

Structural Condition: Even though a community group has requested permission to use the structure, it is difficult to see how the space can be effectively utilized. There are no company rooms, therefore no small meeting rooms. The drill shed is unpaved and suitable for the storage of vehicles only. There is a small gym, but it is lost in the huge amount of wasted space. Constructed in 1903, it is the only armory which is so designed as to open to view the unsightly roof of the drill shed. All told, it is a prime example of mismanagement-- unjustifiably large sums of money are being invested in the care and feeding of vehicles.

Neighborhood Conditions: The armory is completely surrounded by dwelling units and their supportive facilities. It lies two blocks from the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. The stability of the Crown Heights residential community is being threatened. A considerable amount of pre-planning is required to halt the downgrading process.

Recommendations: In view of the needs of this community and the City's desire to keep Crown Heights from deterioration, this site would make an excellent location for new housing. It would be wise policy for government funds to continue to be expended toward the removal of tanks and trucks when the housing needs of New York City are so great. The site is large enough to accommodate approximately 330 new units under the applicable zoning regulations.

b. 41st Street Avenue

Area: 109,400 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$200,000 for land; \$1,200,000 for land and improvements.

Surrounding Streets: Eighth Avenue, 14 Street, Seventh Avenue, 15 Street.

Present Use: Although a large number of men train here, it is in use only on week-ends and three nights a week. Its public assembly hall has been closed because of extremely hazardous fire conditions. The only non-military use of the armory is for target practice by off-duty police.

Structural Condition: The basic structure was built in 1895 and an addition in 1930. It is this addition which accounts for the relatively high value of the structure. This Armory is the best example we have of the State's policy of pouring money into the maintenance of a structure which is at the end of its useful life. Major repairs have been made in the past few years and are scheduled to continue, even though the bulk of the building is useless. A crawlway running the full length of the drill shed between the ceiling and the roof makes fire control almost impossible. Even though conditions are hazardous, there are no fire escapes, and it is planned that people working on the upper floors will escape via tow lines presently tied to window-side radiators.

Neighborhood Conditions: Park Slope remains a viable low-income residential neighborhood. The Armory lies within a large residential zone composed of old but well-maintained dwelling units. An immediate use for this site can be made by the Department of Welfare for construction of an adolescent girl's shelter. Funds have already been appropriated in the 1965 Capital Budget, Line 517. By reason of size, good transportation, and the type of residential neighborhood in which it is located--neither depressed nor of high caliber--this would make an ideal site for a youth facility. In the event that it cannot be acquired soon enough to meet the time needs of the Welfare Department, it would be an ideal site for relocation housing.

5. 1322 Bedford Avenue

Size: 206,500 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$325,000 for land; \$950,000 for land and improvements; \$1.57 per square foot of land.

Bordering Streets: Atlantic Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Pacific Street, Bedford Avenue.

Present Use: A small number of trainees use the Armory and no public or community uses are allowed. The reason for this minimal use of an existing facility was not immediately ascertainable.

Structural Condition: Built in 1896, the Armory is very well maintained, with beautifully decorated though rarely used council rooms. Layout is standard and the drill shed is covered with the usual complement of motor vehicles.

Neighborhood Conditions: Located in a manufacturing zone, it lies on the border of a large-sized R6 district. Manufacturing structures lie to the north of the Armory and apartment houses to the south. The apartment structures are in excellent condition and the neighborhood is thoroughly viable for continued residential use.

Recommendations: Given this Armory's limited usefulness for military purposes and its underutilization for community purposes, its value to the National Guard and to Crown Heights, the immediate community, is open to question. Sufficient knowledge of the conditions under which this Armory operates has not been freely given, and it has therefore been included in our list of armories which may have value for private redevelopment. Further study is indicated.

6. 52 Street and First Avenue

Size: 189,800 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$1,325,000 for land; \$2,025,000 for land and improvements.

Bordering Streets: 52 Street, First Avenue, 53 Street, Upper Bay.

Present Use: While the Armory is owned by the State, it is maintained by the Federal Government, and both Reserve and Naval Militia units train here. The Armory is located on the waterfront, where non-seaworthy boats are docked and used for training purposes. Youth groups from all over the City use the drill shed for recreation and assembly. Further use by such groups should be encouraged.

Structural Condition: Built in 1904, this Armory is of standard construction, though the drill shed is referred to as the "main deck," and contains, instead of the usual motor vehicles, a sample bridge at one end and a sample prop at the other. The building itself is nothing less than a monstrosity. Although its use for military purposes is extremely limited (the Federal Government, in its annual inspection tours, always recommends its abolition),

it is well maintained. A new sump system has recently been installed. This, however, is no indication of its continued utilization by the State.

Neighborhood Conditions: Adjacent to the United States Army Supply Base and Bush Terminal, the Armory is located in the heart of what appears to be a healthy industrial district. Indeed the area is particularly well-suited for manufacturing, containing as it does excellent links to all parts of the City and region via highway, water and rail. (A rail line passes directly in front of the site.)

Recommendations: Although military use here is limited, we do not believe that this Armory will soon be given up, given its ideal location for training naval personnel. Only one other armory lies on the waterfront--the small one on Staten Island near the piers at the head of Victory Boulevard, and it does not use the waterfront as part of its training program. Although the building is eminently suited for indoor recreation use, there is no residential community lying near enough at hand to take regular advantage of the facilities which it offers. Youth groups presently using the building come from all over the City and can be redirected to other armories. Given the surrounding neighborhood, there is no immediate residential land use needs which can be satisfied at this location. While the site would make an excellent addition to the City's stock of land suitable for manufacturing, we cannot recommend its acquisition at a high priority level until such time as the City is prepared to embark on a full-scale industrial district program and until such time as plans for the to be abandoned Army Supply Base have been completed.

BRONX ARMORIES

1. 29 West Kingsbridge Road

Size: 210,000sq. ft.

Assessment: \$700,000 for land; \$2,200,000 for land and improvements; \$3.33
per square foot of land

Bordering Streets: West 195 Street, Reservoir Avenue, Kingsbridge Road West,
Jerome Avenue.

Present Use: The largest Armory in the City, over 2,300 men can train here on any one night. It is in military use four nights a week plus an occasional weekend. Vehicle servicing is an important function. The demand for use of its facilities by community groups is not great but Armory personnel are willing and able to service them.

Structural Condition: Built in 1913, it is in excellent condition and very well maintained. Nonetheless, maintenance costs are high, considering its huge size, and the roof of the drill shed--a perpetual problem in structures of this type-- was recently redone. Vehicles can enter the structure on three levels from three separate entrances. The external architecture of the building is the most striking of the entire group. Two large pointed towers mark the front of the structure and can be seen as a landmark for some distance in The Bronx. The turrets and gates give the impression of a fairytale castle; only the moat is missing.

Neighborhood Conditions: Although mapped as an R6 district, the site lies on a commercial strip and is bordered on the north by an elementary school, a large high school and the Hunter College Bronx campus. A solid residential district lies to the south. An elevated IRT subway line runs along the armory's western border and a subway station is at the corner. The Armory breaks up what would otherwise be an ordinary commercial street.

Recommendations: There is not the least likelihood that the State would agree to negotiate for the return of this Armory to City hands at this time or in the foreseeable future. Should the City ever acquire title to the property it would have on its hands a large "red elephant." In its present use as a well-maintained military training facility the Armory can remain an interesting landmark in The Bronx. The Landmarks Preservation Commission has already designated the Armory at 69 Street and Park Avenue as a landmark and, according to Mr. Van Derpool, it cannot justify the retention of another armory structure in the City, no matter how worthy. By encouraging an indefinite continuation of military use here, the City benefits from the maintenance of a landmark in The Bronx at no expenditure of City funds.

2. 1122 Franklin Avenue

Size: 61,000 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$10,000 for land; \$640,000 for land and improvements; \$2.30
per square foot of land.

Bordering Streets: East 167 Street, Franklin Avenue, East 166 Street,
Boston Road.

Present Use: Both the Federal government and the State use this Armory for training military units, but it can accommodate only a small number of men. Units meet here three nights a week. Vehicular storage and servicing are major functions. Usable space is covered with vehicles so that community functions cannot possibly take place here. It is important to note, in connection with the high priority for acquisition which has been assigned to this Armory, that the State has specifically removed from it the burden of offering its facilities to nonprofit organizations. It might, therefore, be possible that the State itself considers this Armory to be of minimal significance in its training program and might, therefore, be willing to negotiate its return in the near future.

Structural Condition: From a superficial glance at the exterior of the structure the Armory can be rated in poor condition. The drill shed is completely covered by vehicles. The staff was reluctant to supply more detailed information.

Neighborhood Conditions: This section of the Morrisania community is similar to any number of neighborhoods in the lower Bronx. It is a ghetto for minority groups, containing poorly maintained housing and inadequate community facilities. The armory block itself is a microcosm of the sort of conditions one finds in the entire neighborhood. Several old buildings have been boarded up and stand side-by-side with a few weedy vacant lots and several poorly maintained residential structures. Morris High School lies directly to the west of the site and on the east there is a small triangular plot covered with playground equipment. This "park" faces St. Augustine's Church, which is a high point of design in the neighborhood. As these blocks are presently developed, the playground is entirely inaccessible to the residential units for it lies at the edge of the fearsome armory block on one side, and the above-grade Third Avenue Bridge on the other.

Recommendations: Of all the armories studied, this one can satisfy the most urgent of needs. The problems of the neighboring community are enormous on several levels: Lack of open space, minimal recreational activities, a host of blighting influences. The School Section reports that an immediate use can be made of the site for a new elementary school. The need for educational facilities in this area is well known, and although an appropriation for a new school has been included in the Capital Budget (Line 20), the only site now available will provide an inferior school building. The site is divided by a street and the new school building would, therefore, be divided in two. Community pressure for new school construction has been intense, but a school building such as this one, as proposed by the Board of Education, would be totally unacceptable. Residents of neighborhoods having lesser need to combat

blight than this one does would object strenuously. This community would be entirely justified in considering itself shortchanged by the City if its new schools do not meet minimal requirements of good school planning. The Armory site would make an ideal substitute for the proposed site, linking Morris High School and the small playground to the east into an educational-recreational complex and opening up to view the inherent, though at present unrealized, focal point of the Catholic Church.

Should it be impossible to acquire this site in sufficient time (by 1966) to allow new school construction as proposed above, the site of the Armory combined with the sites of the boarded-up buildings and the vacant lots would make an excellent addition to the open space supply in Morrisania and would create an element of urban design in an area almost completely lacking quality construction. The need for recreation space in Morrisania hardly needs documentation. The Community Council of Greater New York has this to say: "Three neighborhoods in the lower Bronx; South Bronx, Morrisania and Hunts Point, comprise a neighborhood grouping with the most extensive needs and lowest levels of service, as compared with city-wide averages."¹

¹Community Council of Greater New York, Comparative Recreation Needs and Services in New York Neighborhoods, 1963. p. 127.

ARMORIES

137-58 Northern Boulevard

Size: 56,200 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$145,000 for land; \$195,000 for land and improvements.

(There may be an error either in judgment or in typography, since the structure appears to be more substantial than its assessed value - \$50,000--would indicate.)

Bordering Streets: Union Street, Seventh Avenue, Main Street--Northern Boulevard.

Present Use: This Armory is an active training center even though its capacity is limited. Although crowding exists on nights when units use the Armory, more of the centrally located units are expected to begin training here in the near future. Because of its small size all of the military vehicles are parked outdoors on the ample site. It is eminently usable for indoor recreational purposes but is not used too frequently because of the intensity of military training. Flushing High, about one-half block from the Armory, does take advantage of the drill shed on occasion.

Structural Condition: Constructed in 1905, the building faces on Northern Boulevard and rests on an attractive slope leading to the entrance. It has a hip roof rather than the usual dome. There are no spectator seats around the drill shed, which, because of its limited size, makes a far more usable indoor recreational facility than some of the larger, more massive drill sheds.

Neighborhood Conditions: The Armory lies on a particularly active section of heavily commercial Northern Boulevard. Robert Hall and Sears Roebuck are its closeby neighbors. The residential area lying to the east is heavily developed and construction was noted for several blocks in the vicinity. To the west lies a manufacturing district containing a large amount of parking, automotive servicing and light industry. The Queens Borough Parks Department and Police Department have their offices close to the Armory. Main Street is another intense shopping strip.

Recommendations: To the best of our knowledge it is unlikely that this armory will be returned to City hands in the foreseeable future. We are informed that the site has always been State property and was not part of the package delivered to the State in 1942. This is undoubtedly a valuable piece of property for commercial development and its addition to the City tax rolls would not be inconsequential, given its proximity to the intersection of Northern Boulevard and Main Street, the development of new housing in the immediate locale, and its substantial commercial neighbors.

2. 93-05 168 Street

Size: 102,800 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$100,000 for land; \$1,500,000 for land and improvements; \$0.97 per square foot of land.

Bordering Streets: 168 Street, 93 Avenue, 170 Street, Long Island Rail Road.

Present Use: Three units use this armory for training purposes. The number of cars stored here is enormous, both on the basement level and on the drill shed. Machine shops at the back of the drill shed provide full-time servicing for military vehicles, not only for those used by this armory but also by other armories all over the City. The same kind of servicing is part of the program of the Franklin Street Armory in The Bronx and the 14 Street Armory in Manhattan. Only the Kingsbridge Armory in The Bronx has larger indoor capacity for the storage of vehicles. Community activity is extremely limited if at all possible because of the full-time machine-service operation.

Structural Condition: The newest of the armories in New York City, the 104th Field Artillery was built in 1933 and is in excellent condition. It is also the most modern in architecture. (Turrets and towers are, however, preferable to the modern version.)

Neighborhood Conditions: The Armory lies in an R6 district which is separated from an M1-1 district by the Long Island Rail Road. The residential portion of the neighborhood contains very old frame dwellings which use only a small portion of the front of long narrow lots, leaving the remainder of the lots a jungle of rubbish, poles, drying

racks, and an occasional scrubby tree. Although the houses, old as they are, are well-maintained, the bulk of each block looks like the "before" of a rehabilitation project. The poor planning of the land combined with the presence of a large number of parking lots gives the appearance of an underutilized neighborhood. Several light industry establishments can be found in the residential neighborhood. However, the manufacturing district to the south of the Armory is a vital one, containing many large factories and warehouses, and is a good resource for industrial development and relocation.

Recommendations: This Armory is certainly very low on our re-acquisition priority list. The State would not want to relinquish a substantial property which is so effectively organized to accomplish its military function. It is unfortunate that the structure cannot be made available to the community at large, but if military structures are required within the City, this one is probably, from our own point of view, most ideally located to accomplish its military tasks.

STATEN ISLAND ARMORIES

1. 321 Manor Road

Size: 818,300 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$400,000 for land; \$650,000 for land and improvements.

Bordering Streets: Manor Road, Slosson Avenue, Drake Avenue, Martling Avenue.

Present Use: A small armory, it is being enlarged to more than twice its present size in order to accommodate units being displaced from the Armory at 94 Street and Madison Avenue. The present building occupies somewhat less than four acres, but the parcel, almost 19 acres in size, can accommodate a much larger structure than even the one contemplated. Construction of the new wing will begin on July 1, and remodeling of the existing building some time thereafter.

Although at present the structure can accommodate only 290 men per week, it will eventually be able to accommodate more than 700 men, with a full complement of military vehicles. Because of the size of the parcel, it was possible to carve out a tank driving range to the back of the structure. It is the only such training facility in the area. Even with the enlargement of the structure, there will be ample space for the continuation of tank-use training.

The community has repeatedly made use of whatever facilities the Armory can offer. These have been limited/ ^{because} the gymnasium has a concrete floor and the drill shed is small. Remodeling will create a large number of indoor recreation facilities which can be used by the community. At present, demand for such space will not be great because of the small population in the surrounding area. However, other communities within Staten Island should be encouraged to make fuller use of the facilities as soon as they are available.

Structural Condition: Built in 1926, the Armory is an imposing structure which, because of its unusual shape, appears to fill the entire parcel rather than only a small part of the front portion. It is a visual asset in a neighborhood which

would otherwise be an unbroken row of single-family dwellings, although these are of fine quality.

Neighborhood Conditions: The Armory lies on the southeast border of Clove Lakes Park and will be easily accessible from many sections of the City when the new system of roads on the Island is completed. The residential neighborhood surrounding it is an excellent example of the type of environment which Staten Islanders have traditionally claimed ^{theirs --} is a quiet and lovely village.

Recommendations: Since this Armory will take up the functions previously performed by centrally located armories which are soon to be abandoned and will provide space for extensive community facilities, we can only concur.

Because the City reimburses the State for the construction of new armories when it acquires title to the old, a study of the financial advantages and/or disadvantages of alternative sites for the new armories compared with the contemplated reuse of the old sites should be undertaken. At present, the City has no clear understanding of the relationship between the money it is and will be spending on new armory construction and the benefits it is deriving through reacquisition of property.

2. Murray Hulbert Avenue and Hanna Street.

Size: 26,400 sq. ft.

Assessment: \$20,000 for land; \$40,000 for land and improvements.

Present Use: This armory is used exclusively by the Federal Naval Reserve although it is owned and maintained by the State. The entire staff is composed of Navy personnel. Two hundred men train here each night but, in view of the limited space, it is hard to see how they can accomplish a great deal. At present, there appears to be no need for the Armory to be located near the piers for, unlike the Naval Armory on the piers in Brooklyn, no training ships are docked in the Bay. No community use is made of this Armory, nor could there be, given the limited space and poor location.

Structural Condition: Unlike most of the other armories, this one bears no distinguishing characteristics. Over the years, two additions were made to the original structure. Although internally connected, the three sections were obviously built at different times and the end product leaves a great deal to be desired.

Neighborhood Conditions: The Armory lies at the foot of Victory Boulevard, close to the first of the Staten Island piers. On the northern edge of the Armory is a large fenced-in swimming pool. The pier immediately to the north is a community recreation center offering a valuable service to the Stapleton and Tompkinsville communities. The area to the south is no different from the rest of Staten Island's deteriorated waterfront.

Recommendations: The Zeckendorf project, Harbour Houses, is proposed to be constructed on the piers and backup lands two blocks to the north of this Armory. This addition to waterfront development on Staten Island will be a first step in the lengthy process of replanning and redeveloping the blighted areas bordering the unused piers. Given that this Armory lies at the edge of a combined new residential-community facility complex, it can and should be redeveloped as a landscaped area buffering new development from the existing deteriorated shorefront areas. While the parcel is small, it will accommodate supplementary recreation functions as well as the desired landscaping.

